

In the claims:

Please amend the claims as shown below:

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1. (Currently amended) A method of sending information through a physical topology, comprising:
providing the physical topology with a first node and a second node, the first node having a first access port, a second
10 access port and a first uplink connected to a router, the first access port having a first port number and the second access port having a second port number;
~~providing a~~ the second node having a first access port and a first uplink, the first uplink of the second node being
15 connected to the first access port of the first node, the first access port of the second node having a third port number;
providing a third node having a first access port and a first uplink, the first uplink of the third node being connected to
20 the second access port of the first node;
sending a first packet via the first access port to the second node, the first packet having a tag having a first nibble field and a second nibble field;
the second node adding the third ~~a tag with a first~~ port number of the first access port of the second node to the
25 first nibble field of the first packet;
the second node sending the first packet via the first uplink of the second node to the first access port of the first node;
the first node receiving the first packet via the first access
30 port of the first node;
the first node adding the ~~a~~ first port number of the first access port of the first node to the first or second nibble field of the tag adjacent to the third port number; and

the first node sending the first packet via the first uplink of the first node to a first router.

5 2. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the method further comprises providing the first node with a second uplink connected to a first sister node, the first sister node being identical to the first node.

10 3. (Currently amended) The method according to claim ~~1~~ 2 wherein the method further comprises, the first node sending the first packet via the second uplink to the first sister node.

15 4. (Original) The method according to claim 3 wherein the method further comprises the first sister node sending the first packet via a first uplink of the first sister node to a second router.

20 5. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the method further comprises determining whether the first nibble field is a first non-empty nibble. ~~providing the tag of the first packet with a first nibble containing a port number of a previous node and a second nibble, the first node adding the first port number of the first node to the second nibble.~~
25 ~~nibble.~~

30 6. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 5 wherein the method further comprises determining whether the first node is in a leaf mode or in a branch mode. ~~shifting the first port number in the first nibble to the second nibble.~~

7. (Currently amended) The method according to claim ~~1~~ 6 wherein the method further comprises always adding a new tag when the first node is in the leaf mode. ~~providing a tag of a~~

~~second packet with a first nibble containing a second port number and a second nibble.~~

5 8. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 7 1
wherein the method further comprises the second node removing
~~the~~ a port number stored in a first nibble field of a second
packet ~~second port number from the first nibble of the second~~
~~packet.~~

10 9. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 8 wherein
the method further comprises the second node removing the port
number from the first nibble field when the first nibble field
is non-empty. ~~tag from the second packet when the tag in first~~
~~and the second nibbles.~~

15 10. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the
method further comprises forming a tree topology of nodes
connected to one another.

20 11. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the
method further comprises forming a ring topology of nodes
connected to one another.

25 12. (New) A method of sending information through a physical
topology, comprising:
providing the physical topology with a first node and a second
node, the first node having a first access port, a second
access port and a first uplink connected to a router, the
second node having a first access port and a first uplink, the
30 first uplink of the second node being connected to the first
access port of the first node;
sending a first packet in an egress direction from the router
via the first uplink to the first node, the first packet
having a tag having a first nibble field and a second nibble
35 field;

the first node reading a port number in the first nibble field;

the first node removing the port number in the first nibble field of the first packet;

5 the first node sending the first packet to the second node;

the second node reading the port number in the second nibble;

the second node removing the port number in the second nibble;

the second node sending the first packet, via the port number read in the second nibble, to a destination device.

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13. (New) The method according to claim 12 wherein the method further comprises the first node sending the first packet, via the port number read in the first nibble, to the second node.